

Anaconda Historic District
Washoe Theater
305 Main Street
Anaconda
Deer Lodge County
Montana

HABS No. MT-53-B

HABS
MONT,
12-ANAC,
1-B-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ANACONDA HISTORIC DISTRICT
WASHOE THEATER
MT-53-B

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Date: 1936

Location: 305 Main Street

Architect/Builder: B. Marcus Priteca, Architect; Gus Forseen, Contractor

Owner: Henry Lussy, Anaconda, Montana

Significance: Designed by B. Marcus Priteca, Architect, and built by Gus Forseen, Missoula contractor, the Washoe Theater opened to the public on September 24, 1936. Both the Theater's structural architecture and elaborate interior decor are outstanding examples of the contemporary art deco style. Construction of the 1,000 seat theater began in 1931, and was financed by the Washoe Amusement Company at a total cost of \$200,000. Completion of this structure was delayed until 1936, due to retarding effects of the depression. Hollywood artist Nat Smythe prepared the designs and watercolor sketches for the interior and the original drawings are still maintained by the current owner. Aside from the murals, executed by three expert decorators, decorative wall and ceiling work throughout the theater was the work of members of the Painters Local of Anaconda under Smythe's supervision. The applied decor employs pastel colors with eight shades of gold leaf in addition to burnished gold leaf on relief elements. When first opened, the Washoe employed the latest projection equipment, and was the only theater in Montana to install a Western Electric Microphone (stereophone) sound system, first developed in 1933 by Bell Telephone Laboratories. The interior decor also included draperies, a carpet, opera chairs, hardware, and sandblasted glass door panels all carefully selected to compliment the art deco scheme.

Transmitted by: Monica E. Hawley, Historian, 1984

ADDENDUM TO
ANACONDA HISTORIC DISTRICT,
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